

Application No.: 10/743,668

Amendment Dated: February 13, 2007

Reply to Office Action Mailed November 13, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled).

Claim 18 (Currently amended): A method of closing an incision, comprising the steps of:

- a) suturing the incision with a suture to form a closed incision;
- b) introducing the portion of the suture that remains at the final suture exit from the tissue surface, to a longitudinal retaining member having first and second ends;
- c) wrapping the suture around the retaining member by rotating the retaining member in the direction of the closed incision;
- d) guiding the retaining member along the path formed by the suture to the closed incision; and
- e) positioning the first and second ends of the retaining member in first and second recesses of a support member, where the first and second recesses are diametrically opposite to each other and have center points that are coaxial, to form a suture locking device where the retaining member and support member define a free area, such that the final suture exit is bounded by or is adjacent to the free area.

Claims 19-21 (Cancelled).

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Claim 22 (New): The method of claim 18 where the support member has a geometric or arcuate shape.

Claim 23 (New): The method of claim 18 where the support member has an arcuate shape and a geometric cross section.

Claim 24 (New): The method of claim 18 where the support member has a rectangular shape and a geometric cross section.

Claim 25 (New): The method of claim 18 where the retaining member has a geometric cross section.

Claim 26 (New): The method of claim 18 where the retaining member has an opening that extends from the surface of the retaining member to an inner point on the retaining member.

Claim 27 (New): The method of claim 26 where the width of the opening is sized to permit entrance of at least one surgical suture.

Claim 28 (New): The method of claim 18 where the recesses on the support member are geometrically shaped.

Claim 29 (New): The method of claim 18 where the recesses on the support member are non-circular.

Claim 30 (New): The method of claim 18 where the recesses on the support member are asymmetric.

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Claim 31 (New): The method of claim 18 where the recesses on the support member are keyed.

Claim 32 (New): The method of claim 18 where the first and second ends of the retaining member are non-circular.

Claim 33 (New): The method of claim 18 where the first and second ends of the retaining member have asymmetric cross sections.

Claim 34 (New): The method of claim 18 where the first and second ends of the retaining member are keyed.

Claim 35 (New): The method of claim 18 where the support member has at least two angled surfaces.